

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 11, 26-29, 36-39, and 43-47 are currently pending. Claims 40-42 have been canceled without prejudice; and Claims 11, 26-29, 36-39, and 43-47 have been amended by the present amendment. The changes to the claims are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 11, 26-29, 39, and 40-47 were objected to regarding various informalities recited in the claims; the Drawings were objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.83(a) regarding the numeral keys and the enter key; Claims 29, 37-39, and 45-47 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, regarding the “copy server key”; Claims 11, 36, 40, and 41 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,880,851 to Imada (“hereinafter “the ‘851 patent”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,818,900 to Hashimoto et al. (hereinafter “the ‘900 patent”); and Claim 26-28 and 42-44 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected based claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

In response to the objection to the claims, Claims 11 and 36 have been amended to clarify the relative sizes of the start key and the numeral keys; the antecedent basis questions regarding Claims 29 and 46 have corrected; the informality noted in Claim 36 has been corrected; and the set/counter key has been renamed the setting key, as suggested in the Office Action. Accordingly, the objections to the claims are believed to have been overcome.

In response to the objections to the Drawings, Figure 2 has been amended to correctly illustrate the numeral keys and the enter key. Accordingly, a Replacement Sheet of Figure 2 is being submitted herewith. Accordingly, the objection to the Drawings is believed to have been overcome.

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claims 29, 37-39, and 45-47 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, is rendered moot by the present amendment to the claims. Regarding the copy server key, Applicants note that page 7, lines 9-13 of the specification recites that an image forming apparatus “is capable of selectively functioning as a copier, a copy server or a printer, as desired,” using a copy function key 90, a copy server function key 91, and a printer function key 92, respectively. Further, Applicants respectfully submit that one of ordinary skill in the art would recognize that a copy server key on an image forming device was used to operate the image forming device as a copy server configured to store and provide documents. However, in the interest of advancing the prosecution of the present application, the claims have been amended to no longer recite a copy server key. Accordingly, the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 112 is believed to have been overcome.

Amended Claim 11 is directed to an operation and display section of an operation unit for an image forming apparatus, comprising: (1) a touch-screen panel substantially centered on the operation unit; (2) numeral keys and an enter key located at a right-hand side of the touch-screen panel; (3) a clear/stop key located to a right-hand side of the numeral keys and the enter keys; (4) a start key located to a right-hand side of the clear/stop key, the start key being larger than the numeral keys; (5) a program key, a reset/preheat key, and an interrupt key located above the numeral keys and the enter key; and (6) mode selecting keys, located to a left-hand side of the touch-screen panel, configured to select operational modes of the image forming apparatus. Claim 11 has been amended to incorporate the limitations recited in dependent Claims 40-42, which have been canceled without prejudice. Accordingly, the changes to Claims 11 are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 is rendered moot by the present amendment to Claim 11. Since dependent Claim 42 was indicated as allowable and Claim 11 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of Claim 42 and intervening Claims 40 and 41, Applicants respectfully submit that amended Claim 11 patentably defines over any proper combination of the '851 and '900 patents. Further, Applicants submit that the rejections of Claims 40 and 41 are rendered moot by the present cancellation of those claims.

Independent Claim 36 recites limitations analogous to the limitations recited in Claim 11. Moreover, Claim 36 has been amended in a manner analogous to the amendment to Claim 11. Accordingly, for the reasons stated above for the patentability of Claim 11, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 36 is rendered moot by the present amendment to that claim.

Amended Claim 37 is directed to an image forming apparatus having an operation unit, wherein an operation and display section of the operation unit comprises: (1) a touch-screen panel; (2) a setting key, the setting key configured to vary initial set values and operating conditions in accordance with conditions of use; and (3) mode selecting keys configured to select operational modes of the image forming apparatus, the mode selecting keys arranged at a left-hand side of the touch-screen, below the setting key on the operation and display section of the operation unit. The changes to Claim 37 are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.

Applicants respectfully submit that amended Claim 37 patentably defines over any proper combination of the '851 and '900 patents. In particular, Applicants respectfully submit that neither the '851 or '900 patents discloses mode selecting keys for selecting operational modes of the image forming apparatus and a setting key configured to vary initial set values and operating conditions in accordance with conditions of use, as recited in

amended Claim 37. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that amended Claim 37 (and dependent Claim 38) patentably defines over any proper combination of the '851 and '900 patents.

Amended Claim 39 is directed to an image forming apparatus having an operation unit, wherein an operation and display section of the operation unit comprises: (1) a touch-screen panel; (2) numeral keys; (3) an enter key; (4) a clear/stop key arranged at a right-hand side and independently of the numeral keys and the enter key; (5) a program key, a reset/preheat key, and an interrupt key arranged above the numeral keys and the enter key; (6) a trial key arranged at a right-hand side of and independently of the numeral keys and the enter key; (7) a setting key arranged at a top left of a touch-screen panel, the setting key configured to vary initial set values and operating conditions in accordance with conditions of use; and (8) mode selecting keys, arranged at a left-hand side of the touch-screen panel, configured to select operational modes of the image forming apparatus. Claim 39 has been amended as suggested in the Office Action and to include limitations recited in Claim 11. Accordingly, the changes to Claim 39 are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.

The '851 patent is directed to an image processing apparatus having a counter key 62 located on the left-hand side of the key board/display device. However, as admitted in the Office Action, the '851 patent fails to disclose an enter key. Further, Applicants respectfully submit that the '851 patent fails to disclose a program key, a reset/preheat key, and an interrupt key arranged above the numeral keys and the enter key, as recited in amended Claim 39.

The '900 patent is directed to a communication control device for an imaging forming apparatus supervising system. However, Applicants respectfully submit that the '900 fails to

disclose the mode selecting keys and the program key, reset/preheat key, and an interrupt key recited in amended Claim 39.

Thus, no matter how the teachings of the '851 and '900 patents are combined, the combination does not teach or suggest all the limitations recited in amended Claim 39.

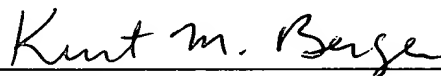
Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that amended Claim 39 patentably defines over any proper combination of the '851 and '900 patents.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 11, 36, 37, and 39 patentably define over any proper combination of the '851 and '900 patents.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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